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Turning Military Victory Into Strategic Success: Evolving Better Capabilities for the Combatant Commander to Conduct Post-Conflict Operations

by

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A paper submitted to the Provost, Naval War College, for consideration in the Prize Essay Competition in the Military Officers Association of America Prize category.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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14. ABSTRACT

It would be an understatement to say events in Iraq, post-combat operations, did not go as envisioned. The obvious question is why? Many of the difficulties experienced by the US military in Iraq were clearly foreshadowed, even predicted.

Almost every analysis of Operation Iraq Freedom (OIF) highlights flaws in the planning for post-war Iraq. The pitfalls can be sorted into several all too familiar categories, including timeliness, unity of effort, prioritization, and completeness and coherence. Military planners significantly underestimated the magnitude of the difficulties they would encounter in Iraq. Lessons emanating from OIF also confirmed several emerging truths about modern military operations. Operations in Iraq firmly substantiated the criticality of successfully executing post-conflict operations to the achievement of strategic aims.

The realities of modern military operations combined with the lessons of OIF strongly argue for a further evolution in the combatant commander's ability to conduct post-conflict operations. The US military can no longer approach post-conflict operations as a second tier event, something that can be done in an ad hoc fashion. The combatant commander needs to have a distinct post-conflict planning and executing capability.

The combatant commander can best achieve this capability by integrating a dedicated post-conflict planning element into his Standing Joint Force Headquarters. Doing so will better ensure he has the needed capabilities and staff integration to effectively plan and orchestrate post-conflict missions.

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Abstract

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FOR THE COMBATANT COMMANDER TO CONDUCT POST-CONFLICT OPERATIONS

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I was confident in the Phase IV plan

General Tommy Franks, *American Soldier*

There was no Phase IV plan

Major Wilson, Army Historian of Operation Iraqi Freedom

It would be an understatement to say events in Iraq, post-combat operations, did not go as envisioned. The obvious question is why? There were certainly ample opportunities and warnings to help effect a more favorable post-conflict outcome in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Since the American-led invasion of Panama in 1989, US military forces have been involved with post-conflict activities on an almost continuous basis. James Dobbins of RAND points out that "this is, after all, the sixth major nation building enterprise the United States has mounted in eleven years, and the fifth in a Muslim nation or province."[1] Many also contend that the US military had, for all practical purposes, been preparing for OIF for the past twelve years. Add to this the archived lessons of post-war Germany and Japan and an array of pre-war studies on post-conflict operations and one begins to question why the United States was not better prepared and able to conduct post-conflict operations more successfully.

The answers are never as simple as implementing the recommendations of an endorsed study or reviewing lessons learned from previous operations. Every military operation is unique and entails its own dynamics and challenges. This is very much the case with Iraq, where the operating environment is highly complex and not always well understood. "There is no consensus on the nature of the Iraqi nation," writes Dobbins.[2] The society is exceptionally difficult for Westerners to penetrate and the factions and fragmentations are extraordinarily complex.[3] Still, with OIF it is very difficult to rationalize away the flawed planning and disjointed execution of initial Phase IV, post-conflict operations, given the abundance of experience the US military has had in performing these missions. Many of the difficulties encountered by the US military in Iraq were clearly foreshadowed; even predicted. No less than six major studies, including ones by the Army and Marine Corps, were completed and briefed out prior to the start of hostilities in Iraq. The pitfalls were known.[4] More importantly, many of

the solutions to these challenges were within the control of the US military.

The US military can no longer approach post-conflict operations as a second tier event, something that can be cobbled together and done in an ad hoc fashion. Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq firmly substantiated the criticality of successfully executing post-conflict operations to the achievement of strategic aims. The combatant commander needs to have a distinct post-conflict planning and executing capability.[5] This essay will argue that the combatant commander can best achieve this capability by integrating a dedicated, post-conflict planning element into his existing planning architecture and specifically within his Standing Joint Force Headquarters (SJFHQ). The SJFHQ represents an excellent medium in which the combatant commander can ensure he has a focused, ready, and in-place planning capability for post-conflict operations. This upgrade in planning capability combined with strong leadership from the combatant commander will increase the probability of translating military battlefield victories into strategic successes.

This study consists of three major parts. The first part will examine why combatant commanders have continually been challenged to successfully execute post-conflict operations. The aim of this brief review is to bring out the underlying causes behind what has historically been a deficiency for the combatant commander. The second part will entail a review of the SJFHQ concept. The final segment will then analyze the merits of incorporating a post-conflict functional element within the SJFHQ and what, in general terms, this element might encompass. This examination will concentrate on the operational level of the problem, and specifically those areas that the combatant commander can influence directly. This focus in no way diminishes the vital role the military Services and the US government interagency play in post-conflict activities and the importance of the interaction between these elements and the combatant commander.

Areas like interagency participation, because of their importance, however, merit their own separate discussions and thus are beyond the scope of this paper.

History shows that the US military has a decidedly mixed record of success when it comes to post-conflict operations. A 2004 Defense Science Board (DSB) study looked at nine different historical cases of post-conflict missions. Of the nine, only one, Germany after World War II, was assessed a successful operation. The other eight cases suffered a series of maladies largely centered around inadequate planning.[6] A similar case study conducted by the National Defense University found an equally poor success rate. Of the seven historical cases it analyzed, two were assessed as having little or no "degree of success" and Afghanistan and Iraq were still labeled undecided.[7] Like the DSB study, the only successes the authors could identify were those of post-war Germany and Japan. It is instructive then to look briefly at what made these operations such clear standard bearers.

What stands out when one reviews post-war Germany is the amount of emphasis and time military leaders devoted to planning for the post-hostilities phase of operations. Detailed planning for the Allied occupation began over two years before the Germans would surrender.[8] A separate post-conflict headquarters was stood up under the command of General Lucius Clay. Clay's headquarters was an integrated civil-military staff and he reported directly to General Eisenhower.[9] All staff sections at Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) were involved in developing the plan.[10] Planners designated specific military governance units to follow combat forces closely and once Germany surrendered small mobile detachments were sent out immediately to every town in the US occupation zone.[11] The key lessons that quickly emerge from a review of Germany are the value of detailed planning done well in advance of the start of post-conflict operations and the importance of having leaders dedicated to these

preparatory efforts. These two factors, as much as any others, were instrumental in the Allies' successful transition from hostilities to stabilization operations. Equally important lessons can also be derived from examining poorly executed post-conflict operations. The aftermath of Operation Just Cause, the US invasion of Panama in 1989, provides just such an example.

Nearly every aspect of planning and preparation for the post-conflict phase of Operation Just Cause was flawed. Planning for the post-conflict restoration was not a priority, disconnected from the invasion plan, and given short shrift by key leaders.[12] It excluded civilian agencies and was based on a number of poor assumptions. General Maxwell Thurman, the combatant commander for the operation, noted that "it was a plan based on the hope that life would quickly return to normal. Unfortunately, it was a faulty premise. In fact the opposite transpired."[13] General Thurman acknowledged that restoration operations were not a priority and that issues of warfighting dominated the planning agenda.[14] XVIII Corps planners generally treated the SOUTCOM staff as irrelevant.[15] "We had no requirements to consider post-conflict operations and no desire to work with other government agencies," remarked then BG William Hertzog, the Corps J3 for Just Cause.[16] Planning for combat operations and post-conflict tasks were for all purposes two separate and distinct events with the later being the overwhelming secondary priority. Despite 22 months to prepare, the plan for the post-conflict phase was not completed when combat operations commenced.[17] Those charged with planning the restoration phase lacked sufficient expertise and guidance to do so effectively.[18] Looking back, the post-conflict plan for Panama was little more than an afterthought.

Fourteen years later, post-conflict operations in Iraq fell prey to many of the same shortcomings. Almost every analysis of OIF highlights flaws in the planning for post-war Iraq. These pitfalls can be sorted into several, all too familiar categories, including timeliness, unity of

effort, prioritization, and completeness and coherence. Planning for OIF largely followed the traditional military pattern. Combat operations dominated the process. "All the A-Team guys wanted to be on Phase III and the B-Team guys were put on Phase IV," was the view of a planner involved with the effort.[19] For much of the military, post-war planning remained a secondary priority. This mindset reflected the military's long standing aversion to participation in peacekeeping type missions. In OIF, the military's war planning was light years ahead of its planning for everything else, observed a senior defense official involved with the effort.[20] Central Command officials acknowledged that their post-war planning group took a back seat to the combat planners.[21] Over nine months of concerted effort was dedicated to developing the combat plans, whereas only 28 days were devoted to preparing plans for the after war phase.[22]

Despite a litany of warnings, planning also succumbed to a second, common pitfall – underestimation. The most universal critique of pre-war planning for OIF is the failure of leaders and planners to appreciate how difficult the post-conflict phase of the operation was going to be. US intelligence officials, according to a CIA spokesman, were "utterly consistent in arguing that reconstruction rather than war would be the most problematic segment of over-throwing Saddam's regime."[23] Post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction, however, were addressed only generally, largely because of the prevailing view that the task would not be difficult.[24] The now famous flawed assumptions for post-war Iraq allowed military leaders and planners to keep Phase IV planning a secondary effort. In accepting the assumptions that coalition forces would inherit a fully functioning modern state with government ministries and public utilities in working order and that resistance would end quickly, planners were able to write off the more onerous challenges.[25] Instead of Panama they were expecting Germany.

The tendency of military leaders to overlook or minimize the importance and difficulties

of post-conflict operations is rooted in its historical bias against peacekeeping activities. General Shelton's statement in 2000, that, "the fundamental purpose of America's armed forces is to fight and win wars. Plain and simple . . ." aptly captures the sentiment many in the military have traditionally held with regard to post-conflict missions.[26] LTG Yeosock, the ARFOR commander during the first Gulf War with responsibilities for restoration operations in Kuwait, described it more bluntly, saying "he was handed a dripping bag of manure that no one else wanted to deal with."[27] Peacekeeping type activities have always been considered a lesser included set of combat operations.[28] Such an approach, it is argued, ensures readiness for the military's paramount obligation – fighting and winning the nation's wars. The military, and especially the Army, has long resisted calls to establish separate forces for peacekeeping fearing a dulling of its warrior ethos brought about by prolonged commitments to these missions and their focus on soft power competencies. Additionally, within the Army there remain strong concerns about erosion in its budget share and being relegated to a low tech, constabulary type force. The US military's vast dominance in conventional combat operations today, however, is skewing this equation. While no war can be considered easy, the US military has handily won every conflict it has entered since the Vietnam War. Securing a favorable peace, in many respects, is actually becoming the greater challenge. For the combatant commander, it is a challenge that he is oftentimes ill-prepared to carry out.

Issues of time, coordination, and coherence also plagued Phase IV planning efforts. By almost all accounts, planning for post-conflict operations in Iraq started too late and never received the amount of time it merited. "The messiah could not have organized a sufficient relief and reconstruction or humanitarian effort in that short a time," recalled Judith Yaphoe, a former CIA analyst who assisted military planning efforts.[29] LTG (Ret) Garner assumed leadership of

the Pentagon-created Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) just 62 days before combat operations were initiated in Iraq. As a comparative, General Clay had been overseeing post-war planning activities for several years before he reported to SHAEF to continue in-theater planning. Time was also affected by how the coalition intended to fight the ground war. Building a campaign around rapid decisive operations and the subsequent swift defeat of Iraqi forces that ensued significantly lessened the time available to prepare for the post-conflict phase. It also left fewer troops in place to accomplish critical, often labor intensive post-hostilities tasks. Coordination was fragmented among the various agencies that were supporting the combatant commander's planning efforts. ORHA, for example, was placed under operational control to the Combined Forces Land Component Commander (CFLCC), but LTG (Ret) Garner sustained almost daily direct contact with Secretary Rumsfeld and his principal aides.[30] General McKiernan, the CFLCC Commander, for his part, did not view post-conflict security as his mission, but rather that of ORHA.[31] Reporting chains may have been clear on wiring diagrams, but they were far more ambiguous on the ground. "Civilians and the military never got on the same page," was the assessment of a senior aide to LTG (Ret) Garner.[32]

The result of these lapses was an incomplete plan for post-conflict operations and gaps in responsibility. "There was no Phase IV plan" for occupying Iraq after the combat phase, recalls MAJ Isaiah Wilson, who served as an official historian of the campaign.[33] "While there may have been plans, none of these plans operationalized the problem beyond regime collapse," he writes.[34] Planning that did occur at Central Command for Phase IV was on disasters that never occurred: oil fires, masses of refugees, chemical and biological warfare, and starvation.[35] For months preceding the war, CENTCOM progress reports included a list of post-war issues it categorized as "unresolved, open items."[36] A senior Defense Department official said the

attitude was "we'll go with what we've got and take care of the rest when we get there."[37]

The Army's initial lessons learned report identified almost all of these shortcomings. The report highlighted: the failure to plan early enough and in sufficient detail; a lack of guidance and preparation for Phase IV; and poor unity of effort among transition organizations, including CFLCC and ORHA.[38] These deficiencies compounded the difficulties on the ground in Iraq. The number of troops available was insufficient for the number of tasks being assigned to them. Garner pointed out that with 260 to 270 sites to guard, there were too few troops left to do security.[39] Combat forces were having to contend simultaneously with defeating pockets of enemy resistance while establishing security and basic life services in what was essentially a governance-less nation. The mixes of forces were not optimal for the nature of the missions nor were the forces fully prepared for the conditions they encountered. Needed enabling forces, like civil affairs units and additional military police, were still being mobilized and deployed when the transition from hostilities started. Absent clear guidance, transition operations lacked coherence and were haphazard in execution. As a result, critical time and goodwill was squandered. Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institute captured the cost of losing momentum during the critical period of transition from hostilities to post-conflict, writing:

> Wasting those precious first weeks and months gave this third group – the fence sitters – a perceived rationale to take up violence too. With the security environment and the economy both stagnant, dissatisfaction grew, and the resistance thus had more potential recruits to draw upon.[40]

OIF also confirmed three emerging truths about modern US military operations. First, combatant commanders must expect to be involved in post-conflict operations. Post-conflict operations are neither a passing fancy nor something the commander is going to be able to handoff quickly to other agencies for execution. On average, the US military has conducted an operation related to peacekeeping, peacemaking, or post-conflict operations every two years since the end of the Cold War.[41] Nor is a decrease in the number of these operations likely. The

possibilities for more US involvement of some kind are fairly predictable: support to an intra-Columbian peace accord, a collapsing North Korea, and failing states in Sudan, Liberia, Haiti, and Angola to name but a few.[42] By necessity, post-conflict operations have to be a military-led effort initially. Only military forces possess the resources and organization to provide security, impose law and order, and begin essential restoration and humanitarian activities. Civilian leaders realize that the military is the only agency capable of accomplishing reconstruction tasks in the midst of and aftermath of combat; there are really no other alternatives.[43] Stated or not, post-conflict operations now constitute a core mission for the military.

Second, the combatant commander's ability to successfully realize the strategic objectives for which he undertook military action rests with his ability to successfully conduct post-conflict operations. Winning decisively on the battlefield no longer guarantees strategic victory or a viable peace. One of the great truths of OIF is that combat operations alone will not attain the desired end state.[44] In fact, the decisive phase of operations may be the post-conflict period where the conditions for a favorable peace are often created or squandered. In their report to the Secretary of Defense, the DSB highlighted this very point. The Board found that, "without success in the aftermath of large scale hostilities, the United States will not achieve its political goals – the reason for going to war in the first place."[45]

The third trend concerns the difficulty associated with post-conflict operations. The Stability Operations Joint Operating Concept clearly brings out this point. "Stability operations associated with major combat," it states, "are among the most complicated missions assigned to the US military."[46] A study by the Army War College commissioned by the Army to prepare for its participation in operations in Iraq articulated similar insights about the challenges. "Preparing for the post-war rehabilitation of the Iraqi political system," it surmised, "will probably be more

difficult and complex than planning for combat."[47] If nothing else, the United States' low success rate in post-conflict missions is indicative of how difficult the operations are.[48]

These realities combined with the reaffirmed lessons of OIF strongly argue for a further evolution in the combatant commander's ability to conduct post-conflict operations. To continue to treat post-conflict tasks as a secondary mission or a lesser included set of combat operations is to ignore the centrality of post-conflict tasks in modern military operations. Data from the military's experiences over the last fifteen years are clear on this point. Calls for better and timelier planning and more detailed and collaborative coordination between participating elements in and of itself, however, is not going to result in legitimate improvements. Structural adjustments are needed to bring about meaningful change. To bolster their capabilities for post-conflict operations, combatant commanders need to augment their existing planning mechanisms with a dedicated, in-place element to plan and oversee post-conflict missions. Effecting such a change within their commands will enable them to meet Secretary Rumsfeld's recent guidance to accord "priority and attention comparable to combat operations" to their post-hostilities tasks.[49]

Clearly, other improvements must accompany this recommendation. Improved planning capabilities are only the first of several needed enhancements in post-conflict operational capabilities. Serious consideration must be given to establishing forces specifically organized and trained for post-conflict operations. A reorganization of this nature, while merited in my estimation, will entail very significant change and be contentious. Because of its magnitude, a suitable examination of this recommendation requires a separate study. Important upgrades are also needed in interagency participation and coordination, multi-agency operations, and in how the military departments organize, train, and equip their respective forces for post-conflict missions. All of these areas, however, are beyond the direct control of the combatant

commander. His influence, while often persuasive, is still indirect and confined to lobbying. As such, the remainder of this essay will concentrate on what the combatant commander can effect directly to enhance his capabilities for post-conflict operations.

To improve his planning capabilities for post-conflict operations, the combatant commander should evolve the existing Standing Joint Force Headquarters construct and embed a distinct post-conflict planning element within the headquarters. The SJFHQ is a team of joint operational planners, command and control specialists, and system analysts, pre-assembled and trained as an element that is prepared to form the core of a joint task force (JTF) headquarters.[50] It is a permanent part of the regional combatant commander's headquarters and is intended to provide him with an informed, in-place, command and control capability. Based on combatant commander direction, the SJFHQ undertakes detailed study and analysis of identified focus areas and begins the process of developing estimates and contingency plans. The idea is to facilitate a combatant commander's ability to influence plans for operations earlier on in the process and reduce the ad hoc nature of today's JTF headquarters.[51] In application, the SJFHQ could serve as the core of a JTF; as augmentation to a headquarters designated to be a JTF; or as augmentation to the combatant commander's existing headquarters.[52]

To date, warfighting considerations are dominating the development of the SJFHQ concept. BGen Marc Rodgers, the former Director, Standing Joint Force Headquarters, who oversaw the development of the SJFHQ concept, describes it almost exclusively in warfighting terms. He speaks of "skilled warfighting headquarters personnel" and "transforming how we will command and fight."[53] At present, there is still no specific reference to a post-conflict planning capability in the SJFHQ, absent the regional expertise it acquires from study of its area of operations. Of the 58 positions that make up the SJFHQ currently, not one is specifically

designated for post-conflict issues. There is, for example, no civil-military planner, law enforcement person, strategic communicator, or engineer billet on current manning documents.[54] There are a number of positions that could operate in a dual-hatted capacity, serving as a planner for both combat and post-conflict operations. This arrangement however, remains susceptible to the traditional warfighting-first focus that has so often plagued other post-conflict undertakings. The only field test of the concept, Millennium Challenge 02, was conducted at the National Training Center using a mid-to-high intensity combat scenario.[55] Still, by all accounts, the SJFHQ concept is seen as positive step forward and a viable method for improving pre-crisis planning and JTF readiness. "CENTCOM's experience," notes the Joint Forces Command's Joint Lessons Learned Report on OIF, "indicated the standing joint force is the way forward."[56]

Integrating the SJFHQ with a dedicated post-conflict planning and operations capability, like the other functional teams in the current headquarters, will provide the combatant commander with a complete complement of skill sets for the full range of military operations. In the short term, the combatant commander should add a functional team to the SJFHQ structure dedicated to post-conflict activities. This team will possess expertise in the areas of: security; civil affairs; law; engineering; medical; humanitarian relief and assistance; information operations; and governance issues. It will also possess regional expertise. Longer term, the combatant commander, should evolve the post-conflict element so that it could detach itself from the base SJFHQ and deploy to either form the core of a JTF for post-conflict operations or augment another headquarters that is assigned the post-conflict mission. This element would also be able to expand and form the base of a joint interagency coordination group (JIACG).

Having a dedicated, pre-existing planning element for post-conflict operations addresses many of the shortcomings combatant commanders have traditionally encountered with these

operations. The advantages inherent in a SJFHQ facilitate effective preparations for post-conflict tasks. Of the eight recommended metrics to measure post-conflict operational readiness, the SJFHQ concept addresses six of them.[57] It gives the combatant commander a ready, pre-identified means to plan for post-conflict operations; a capability that, in the past, has often had to be cobbled together or compete with planning actions for hostilities. Preassembling a post-conflict planning cell ameliorates the perpetual challenge of gathering together key skills that reside in units that are scattered throughout the military.[58] It provides the combatant commander with a well informed cadre with good situational understanding. These attributes significantly improve his ability to act in a timely fashion. In post-conflict settings, early successes in the areas of security, public services, and employment are essential.[59] Rapid battlefield victories are also putting a greater premium on being ready to undertake post-conflict operations expeditiously if not concurrently with the combat phases. The SJFHQ, described above, provides for this capability and ensures sustained attention can be given to these tasks.

Incorporating post-conflict functions into the SJFHQ better ties post-conflict planners to the war planning efforts. Being there from the start enables post-conflict planners to facilitate a better vetting of post-conflict considerations and nesting of combat and post-combat plans. Synchronization, unity of effort, and timeliness are all enhanced by such an arrangement. Having an integrated team also ensures that planning for combat operations does not dominate the process completely or come at the expense of post-conflict planning. In this construct, planning for Phase IV type operations begins concurrently with war planning and proceeds in parallel, led by a single chain of command. Like the operational planners, post-conflict members would be able to develop detailed estimates on all matters pertaining to a potential post-conflict mission. Such in-depth understandings are vital in post-conflict operations and it is not realistic

to expect a planner to acquire the degree of familiarity needed to adequately plan for post-conflict tasks while simultaneously developing plans for combat operations. Being able to detach and operationalize a post-conflict command and control (C2) element from the base SJFHQ will provide the combatant commander with a trained entity that could rapidly constitute the nucleus of a JTF headquarters he establishes to lead his post-conflict mission. This capability will speed the JTF commander's ability to initiate and orchestrate essential post-hostilities tasks.

Designating and having a separate commander responsible for post-conflict operations is optimal and how the combatant commander should organize his C2 functions when preparing for operations. As OIF demonstrated, having a "warfighting" commander responsible for both combat operations and post-conflict missions resulted in critical gaps on the ground. LTG Wallace, who oversaw the assaults on Baghdad, called the transition from combat operations to post-hostilities tasks "the real trick."[60] Unless the operating environment is totally benign, the two sets of tasks are simply too much for one leader to orchestrate effectively. The combat commander is going to be consumed by the "fight" and rightly so. It is unrealistic to expect him to emerge from combat operations with staffs and forces ready to immediately assume stabilization tasks beyond several weeks at best. A SJFHQ for post-conflict operations mitigates these over-tasking concerns and ensures vital post-conflict actions are initiated in a timely manner. With time being such a critical factor during the transition from hostilities to post-conflict, it is imperative that the combatant commander have the means to rapidly effect a suitable post-conflict posture, (e.g., effective C2, right mix of forces, arrayed correctly). While this may appear to be an argument for specialization it is really more of a calling for a realistic and more suitable division of labor. It also acknowledges the complexities associated with post-conflict responsibilities and thus the need for focused, informed means of command and control.

Adding more billets to a staff and standing up deployable headquarters elements are never easy or without risks. Obtaining the resources will always be a significant obstacle for the combatant commander to overcome. The needed resources to operationalize a SJFHQ extend beyond just people, although manning will be the central issue. They include all the equipment and sustaining items that allow a headquarters to deploy and function. Compounding these challenges is that few of these resources are readily available in sufficient quantity in any command. There has also been a great deal of debate between those who see large value-added in standing joint organizations and those who worry that such organizations only dilute Service core capabilities.[61] Services continue to be reluctant to assign personnel to contingency planning staffs. Finally, arguments can also be made that by establishing a distinct staff element for post-conflict operations, we continue to perpetuate the separation between combat and post-conflict planning functions.

All of these concerns are valid but none of them represent a permanent impediment to growing a viable post-conflict planning and executing capability in the SJFHQ. Identifying and assigning the personnel is readily doable, especially with leadership from the combatant commander. Over the course of several months, Headquarters, Multinational Forces, Iraq, a joint forces headquarters in all but name, was stood up. Its manning numbers in the hundreds. While the demands of the conflict may have facilitated its quick formation, the fact that it was achievable strongly indicates that personnel are available from within the Services. Rough estimates of the manning needed for a post-conflict element range between 20 and 25 military personnel - - not an insurmountable number. The greater challenge will be getting the right skills given the more specialized nature of post-conflict tasks. Combatant commanders often lack sufficient depth in low density, high demand personnel, like civil affairs specialists and military

police. Some external assistance from the military departments will be necessary to obtain these personnel.

The other significant challenge will be with identifying the flag officer to lead the post-conflict element of the SJFHQ. The combatant commander has limited options for filling the billet from within his command and all of the possibilities come with opportunity costs. Depending on whom he designates as his CFLCC, he could assign the responsibility to the ground component commander not designated to be the CFLCC. While workable, it raises issues of dual-hatted responsibilities and continuity of effort. It does have the benefit of bringing in a leader that is familiar with how the combatant commander operates and knows the area of operations. The combatant commander could tap his deputy commander to assume these duties, but given the scope of the combatant commander's responsibilities it is probably not practical. Another option is for the combatant commander to direct the designated JTF commander assign his deputy commander to lead the post-conflict phase of operations. This approach may be seen as unduly directive and overly disruptive to how the JTF commander operates. It would, however, have the benefit of having one chain of command responsible for overseeing the critical transition period from combat to post-hostilities. External options include having a flag officer being tasked for the duty or permanently assigned to the position. The latter option is impractical given the size of the organization and its duties during non-operational periods. The former option is feasible but has the drawback of bringing in a person who is not wholly familiar with the planning or the command. These drawbacks can be mitigated if the tasked flag officer is seated in a timely manner. Whatever arrangement the combatant commander opts for, the key is to have a separate leader responsible for the post-conflict phase of the operation and that he is designated early enough that he can oversee planning and coordination efforts. OIF amply

demonstrated the need for clarity in responsibility for post-conflict operations.

Obtaining needed resources to make the post-conflict element functional will require funding support. The amounts needed are modest and guidance from the Secretary of Defense now allows the Services to program for capabilities that support stabilization operations.[62] Combatant commanders can influence this process significantly by how they craft their Integrated Priority Lists. Preventing a bifurcation of the staff within the SJFHQ will rest largely with the leadership. The intent behind establishing a post-conflict functional team is to integrate a post-conflict planning and execution capability within the headquarters. Planners for combat and post-conflict would work side-by-side in developing comprehensive campaign plans. Leaders within the SJFHQ will have to ensure this integration is occurring. Under the current organization, leaders have to guard against planners devoting insufficient attention and effort to post-conflict planning tasks given the pressures imposed by having to also plan for combat. In either scenario, the leader is the key. He has to ensure that either the dual-hatted planner is developing complete, comprehensive plans or that the two planners are working collaboratively in developing plans for their respective phases of the operation. In my estimation, the latter is a more viable approach as there is a dedicated person(s) who can ensure post-conflict considerations are not unduly minimized or overlooked. He has a vested interest to do so whereas in the other option, the planner is somewhat shielded by the natural priority given to planning for the combat phase of operations. Having the planners for the combat and post-conflict phases of the operation working in the same element naturally helps deter bifurcation.

During the preparations for US intervention into Bosnia, many of the tactical operations centers in the lead division had the adage, "Victory begins with a plan" posted about their area. While intended to be a humorous reminder of the importance of planning given the inevitable

changes a plan will undergo once the battle starts, it is nonetheless a pointed reminder of the importance of sound planning. Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have once again brought to the forefront all the challenges of planning effectively for the post-conflict phase of these operations. The recent return of US forces to Haiti also reminds us of the costs of not doing these operations well. Nothing on the strategic horizon suggests these challenges will get any easier to execute or that the US military will be able to adapt a lesser role in post-conflict operations for the foreseeable future. As the former UN Secretary General Dag Hammerskold pointed out, "Peacekeeping is not for soldiers, but only soldiers can do peacekeeping."[63] His observation remains true today. All of these considerations provide compelling rationale for the combatant commander to evolve and improve his planning capabilities for post-conflict operations.

Combatant commanders can begin to improve their capabilities for these missions by creating a distinct planning capability for post-conflict operations within their commands. The SJFHQ represents an excellent medium in which to embed this capability. Evolving the SJFHQ construct to include an in-place, dedicated post-conflict planning and execution element better ensures proper focus and weight is given to what is now essentially a core mission for the combatant commander. It will facilitate greater coordination in all the phases of planning, bring needed post-conflict expertise into the equation, and furnish the combatant commander with a more prepared means to orchestrate post-conflict responsibilities. His ability to synchronize the combat and post-combat fights is enhanced by having this more robust SJFHQ element. The proactive flavor of the SJFHQ concept also gives the combatant commander a greater means to influence preparations and coordination for post-conflict matters earlier. Regardless of how he organizes his planning cadre, it is essential that the combatant commander always strive to fully

integrate his post-conflict planning efforts with those of his combat planning. The SJFHQ concept lends itself well to just this kind of integration. For a comparatively modest investment, it represents the potential for significant improvement over the existing, more ad hoc methods currently used. While no plan ensures success, virtually every success started with effective planning and a sound command and control arrangement.

This is an opportune time for combatant commanders to pursue enhancements in their post-conflict capabilities. The fresh lessons emerging from Iraq and Afghanistan are continuing to provide guideposts for how to proceed in the execution of Phase IV tasks. The SJFHQ concept is still in a developmental phase and thus subject to value added modifications. It also has the clear support of the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff. More importantly, across the military there is a greater recognition and acceptance of the critical role successfully executed post-conflict operations play in achieving strategic aims. The Secretary of Defense has recently articulated guidance that essentially puts post-conflict operations on par with warfighting competencies.[64] All of these factors afford the combatant commander sufficient latitude to grow and emplace viable capabilities for post-conflict operations. None of this discussion is meant to suggest that post-conflict operations merit a greater priority than warfighting. Without an ability to decisively defeat an enemy on the battlefield any discussion of a post-hostilities capability becomes somewhat moot. Still, the inescapable conclusion one draws when reviewing military operations today, is the vital importance of properly preparing for what happens when the hostilities cease.

[1] James Dobbins, "Nation-Building: The Inescapable Responsibility of the World's Only Superpower," <u>RAND Review</u>. <http://www.rand.org/publications/randreview/issues/summer2003/nation.html/> [25 March 2005].

[2] James Dobbins and others, <u>America's Role in Nation-Building From Germany to Iraq</u> (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2003), 168.

[3] Conrad C. Crane and W. Andrew Terrill, <u>Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario</u> (Carlisle PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2003), 41.

[4] The six studies referred to are: The February 2003, Marine Warfighting Laboratory "CETO QUICK LOOK: Dealing with the Civilian Population in Post-Saddam Iraq" Report; The Department of State "Future of Iraq" Project, initiated in April 2002 to study the after-war in Iraq scenario; The Council on Foreign Relations', <u>Iraq: The Day After: Report of the Independent Task Force Sponsored by the Council of Foreign Relations</u>, released March 2003; The Center for International and Strategic Studies Report, <u>Post-War Iraq: Are We Ready?</u>, published 25 March 2003; Report of an Independent Working Group, co-sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations and the James A. Baker Institute for Public Policy of Rice University, <u>Guiding Principles for U.S. Post-conflict Policy in Iraq</u>, published January 2003; and the United States Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute, in coordination with the Office of the Army Deputy Chief of Staff/G3 study, <u>Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario</u>, published February 2003.

[5] Hans Binnendijk and Stuart E. Johnson, ed., <u>Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations</u> (Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 2004), 54.

[6] Department of Defense, <u>Defense Science Board 2004 Summer Study on Transition to and from Hostilities</u> (Washington, DC: December 2004), 19. The eight post-conflict cases that the study assessed as having mixed outcomes are: the United States in Panama; Israel in Lebanon; the Soviets in Afghanistan; Algeria; France in Indochina; Britain in Iraq; the American Civil War; and the Romans.

[7] Binnendijk and Johnson, 4-5. The two cases assessed as having little or no "degree of success" are Somalia and Haiti.

[8] Crane and Terrill, 1.

[9] William Flavin, "Planning for Conflict Termination and Post Conflict Success," <u>Parameters</u> (Autumn 2003, Vol. 33). <http:/proquest.umi/pqdweb?did=415268731&sid=4&Fmt=4&clientld=18762RQT=309&VName=PQD/> [18 March 2005].

[10] Crane and Terrill, 2.

[11] Ibid., 13-14.

[12] Ibid., 4.

[13] Richard H. Schultz Jr., <u>In the Aftermath of War</u> (Maxwell Air Base, Alabama: Air University Press, 1993; reprint, Newport RI: Selected Readings, Joint Military Operations Department, United States Naval War College, 2005), 18.

[14] Ibid., 19. General Thurman was quoted as saying: "I think the proclivity was to leave the fighting to the warfighter and the restoration to the people who were in country. SOUTHCOM should have been more attentive to the transition from one phase to the other, but I readily admit it was the last priority on my agenda at the time."

[15] Ibid., 19.

[16] Department of Defense, <u>Defense Science Board 2004 Summer Study on Transition to and from Hostilities</u> (Washington, DC: December 2004), 21.

[17] Crane and Terrill, 4.

[18] Richard H. Schultz Jr., <u>In the Aftermath of War</u> (Maxwell Air Base, Alabama: Air University Press, 1993; reprint, Newport RI: Selected Readings, Joint Military Operations Department, United States Naval War College, 2005), 20-21.

[19] James Fallow, "Blind into Baghdad," <u>Atlantic Monthly</u> (January/February 2004; reprint, Newport RI: Part III, Volume 1, Selected Readings, Strategy and Policy, United States Naval War College, 2004), 26.

[20] Mark Fineman, Robin Wright, and Doyle McManus, "Preparing for War, Stumbling to Peace," <u>Los Angles Times</u>. <http://home.earthlink.net/~imfalse/preparing_for_war_stumblin.html/> [26 March 2005].

[21] Ibid.

[22] Jim Miklaszewski, "Report out of Pentagon Critical of Poor Planning for Post-War Iraq," <u>MSNBC News</u>. <http://www.msnbc.com/news/960962.asp/> [11 April 2005].

[23] Mark Fineman, Robin Wright, and Doyle McManus, "Preparing for War, Stumbling to Peace," Los Angles Times. <http://home.earthlink.net/~imfalse/preparing_for_war_stumblin.html/> [26 March 2005].

[24] Iraq: Translating Lessons Into Future DoD Policies (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, February 2005), 6.

[25] Mark Fineman, Robin Wright, and Doyle McManus, "Preparing for War, Stumbling to Peace," Los Angles Times. <http://home.earthlink.net/~imfalse/preparing_for_war_stumblin.html/> [26 March 2005].

[26] Henry Shelton, "The Military: An Instrument of Statecraft," Vital Speeches of the Day (15 January 2000), 195.

[27] Crane and Terrill, 2.

[28] The assertion made is drawn from a number of sources. They include: Bradley Graham, "Pentagon Considers Creating Postwar Peacekeeping Force," Washington Post, 24 November 2003, sec. 1, p. 16; Congressional Research Service, Peacekeeping and Related Stability Operations: Issues of U.S. Military Involvement, Issue Brief for Congress (Washington, DC: 2004), 5-6, 9; Richard Rinaldo, "Warfighting and Peace Ops: Do Real Soldiers Do MOOTW?" Joint Forces Quarterly (Winter 1996-1997), 111-113. James Jay Carafano, "Post Conflict Operations From Europe to Iraq," The Heritage Foundation Lecture Papers, July 2004. <http://www.heritage.org/research/nationalsecurity/hl844.cfm/> [21 March 2005]. Additionally, I drew on my two years of experience of serving as the Army action officer for the Defense Planning Guidance while assigned to the Strategic Plans and Policy Division, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff/G3, Washington, DC.

[29] Mark Fineman, Robin Wright, and Doyle McManus, "Preparing for War, Stumbling to Peace," Los Angles Times. <http://home.earthlink.net/~imfalse/preparing_for_war_stumblin.html/> [26 March 2005].

[30] Paul F. Dicker, "Effectiveness of Stability Operations During the Initial Implementation of the Transition Phase for Operation Iraqi Freedom," (Unpublished Strategy Research Paper, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA: 2004), 7.

[31] John D. Nelson, "Swiftly Defeat the Efforts, Then What? The "New American Way of War" and Transitioning Decisive Combat to Post-Conflict Stabilization," (Unpublished Strategy Research Paper, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA: 2004), 15.

[32] Mark Fineman, Robin Wright, and Doyle McManus, "Preparing for War, Stumbling to Peace," Los Angles Times. <http://home.earthlink.net/~imfalse/preparing_for_war_stumblin.html/> [26 March 2005].

[33] Thomas E. Ricks, "Army Historian Cites Lack of Postwar Plan," washingtonpost.com, December 25, 2004. <http://www.washingtonpsot.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A24891-2004Dec24/> [29 March 2005].

[34] Ibid. Additionally, the Third Infantry Division (Mechanized) After Action Report states, "3 ID (M) did not have a fully developed plan for the transition to SASO and civil military operations in Baghdad prior to entering the city." In the lesson's learned portion of the report, the authors recommend that, "Follow-on SASO plans must be developed in advance" and that they should "plan to conduct SASO concurrently with combat operations or immediately after the completion of combat operations." See, U.S Army, 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), Operation Iraqi Freedom After Action Report (Fort Stewart, GA: 2003), 11-18.

[35] Mark Fineman, Robin Wright, and Doyle McManus, "Preparing for War, Stumbling to Peace," Los Angles Times. <http://home.earthlink.net/~imfalse/preparing_for_war_stumblin.html/> [26 March 2005].

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] U.S. Army Operation Iraqi Freedom Study Group, "US Army Operation Iraqi Freedom Observations: Quick Look" briefing slides, Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Lessons Learned, August 2003. <http://call2.army.mil/oif/brief/asp/> [7 April 2005].

[39] Paul F. Dicker, "Effectiveness of Stability Operations During the Initial Implementation of the Transition Phase for Operation Iraqi Freedom," (Unpublished Strategy Research Paper, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA: 2004), 10.

[40] Michael E. O'Hanlon, "Iraq Without a Plan," Policy Review, December 2004. <http://www.policy review.org/dec04/ohanlon_print.html/> [21 March 2005].

[41] James Jay Carafano, "Post Conflict Operations From Europe to Iraq," The Heritage Foundation Lecture Papers, July 2004. <http://www.heritage.org/research/nationalsecurity/hl844.cfm/> [21 March 2005]. Additionally, the Defense Science Board 2004 Summer Study, Transition to and from Hostilities calls stabilization and reconstruction missions a "growth industry" (14). The Defense Science Board report also measured the United States' commitment in terms of dollars expended and concluded that, "even if they are not included (Afghanistan and Iraq), the nation has still spent as much on stabilization and reconstruction as on all combat operations over the past decade and a half." (18)

[42] Jeffrey E. Garten, "Urgent: The U.S. Needs to Create a Colonial Service," Foreign Policy, (September-October 2003), p. 64.

[43] Nadia Schadlow, "War and the Art of Governance," Parameters (Carlisle, PA: US Army Strategic Studies Institute; reprint, Newport RI: Part III, Volume 1, Selected Readings, Strategy and Policy, United States Naval War College, 2004), 88.

[44] Gregory Fontenot, E.J. Degen, and David Tohn, On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom (Fort Leavenworth KS: Center for Army Lessons Learned, 2003), 433.

[45] Department of Defense, Defense Science Board 2004 Summer Study on Transition to and from Hostilities (Washington, DC: December 2004), 6. Binnendijk and Johnson in their Army War College sponsored report also highlight this key point. They conclude that, "Both combat and stabilization and reconstruction are critical for success." See Hans Binnendijk and Stuart E. Johnson, ed., Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations (Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 2004), 9.

[46] Department of Defense, Stability Operations Joint Operating Concept, (Washington DC: 2004), iv.

[47] Crane and Terrill, 42.

[48] Binnendijk and Johnson, 6.

[49] Department of Defense, Defense Capabilities to Transition to and from Hostilities, Draft Directive 9-17-2004, Number 3000.cc (Washington, DC: 2004), 3.

[50] Jon Cupp, "JFCOM Empowers Warfighters by Setting Up Standing Joint Force Headquarters," News From JFCOM, 11 March 2004. <http://www.jfcom.mil/newslink/stroyarchive/2004/pa031104.htm/> [29 March 2005].

[51] John T. Bennett, "DoD Puts JFCOM Standing Joint Force Headquarters on Fast Track," Inside the Pentagon (Washington, D.C.: Inside Washington Publishers, 2004; reprint, Newport RI: Selected Readings, Joint Military Operations Department, United States Naval War College, 2005), 1.

[52] "Standing Joint Force Headquarters Core Element," News From JFCOM. <http://www.jfcom.mil/about/fact_sjfhq.htm/> [29 March 2005].

[53] BGen Marc Rodgers, "A Concept for Standing Joint Force Headquarters," briefing slides, Virginia Beach, VA: AFCEA Transformation TechNet Conference, Virginia Beach, VA, 14 May 2003.

[54] Information on SJFHQ manning is drawn from three sources: "A Concept for Standing Joint Forces Headquarters (SJFHQ)" briefing, presented by BGen Marc Rodger, Director Standing Joint Force Headquarters, 14 May 2003; "Standing Joint Force HQ (Core Element): An Introduction" briefing presented by CDR Steven Myers, SJFHQ(CE)-S/T, 13 July 2004; and, the Standing Joint Force Headquarters Prototype manning document, dated 28 April 2003.

Additionally, the draft Standard Operating Procedure and Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for the Standing Joint Forces Headquarters, dated 14 July 2004 does not directly address post-conflict planning capabilities or processes in its discussion of the SJFHQ Plans Organization (Chapter 5) or in its discussion of the Joint Planning Group (Annex E, Plans).

[55] Millennium Challenge 02 was a U.S. Joint Forces Command sponsored exercise focused on testing the military's ability to conduct rapid decisive operations. The exercise simulated a high-end, small scale contingency that had the potential to escalate to a major theater war. Specifically, the exercise scenario took place in a littoral area. The enemy was a "rogue state" with significant combat power, desiring to exert greater regional control. The exercise objectives all related to the joint forces ability to: Establish and maintain information /knowledge superiority; Set the conditions for decisive operations; Assure access into and through the battle space: Conduct effects-based operations. The full range of military operations was to be tested during the two week exercise. Some post-conflict type tasks were exercised but not on a large scale. Most of the post-conflict played centered on experimentation with the Joint Interagency Coordination Group concept. See, "Millennium Challenge 02," News From JFCOM. <http://www.jfcom.mil/about/experiments/mc02.htm/> [1 May 2005] and "Special Pentagon Briefing on Millennium Challenge 2002," Speeches from USJFCOM. <http://www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2002/no071802a.htm/> [1 May 2005]. Additionally, the SJFHQ concept was experimented with during operations in Afghanistan. The United States Army's XVIII Airborne Corps used portions of the effects-based operations, operational net assessment, and joint interagency coordination group concepts in their operations. No specific mention was made of using the SJFHQ concept in a defined post-conflict capacity. See Michael Williams, "USJFCOM Team Researches Headquarters-Level Successes, Challenges in Afghanistan," News From USJFCOM. <http://www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2002/pa122302.htm/> [1 May 2005].

[56] U.S. Joint Forces Command, Joint Lessons Learned: Operation Iraqi Freedom Major Combat Operations (Norfolk, VA: 2004), 22.

[57] Department of Defense, Defense Science Board 2004 Summer Study on Transition to and from Hostilities (Washington, DC: December 2004), 40. The six metrics referred to are: actively train, practice, exercise, and rehearse; evaluate readiness and validate plans; available on short notice; continuity in theater; prepared for a range of cultures, languages; and elasticity to respond and adjust to an adaptive enemy.

[58] Binnendijk and Johnson, xviii. Additionally, the military's experience in Operation Allied Force (Kosovo) is a good example of this challenge. By the time the operation ended, the task force headquarters had filled only 80 percent of its authorized positions. See Jim Garamone, "QDR Approves Joint Force Headquarters Concept," American Forces Press Service, 29 October 2001. <http:www.dod.gov/cgibin/dlprint.cgi?http://www.dod.gov/news/Oct2001/n10292001.htm/> [29 March 2005].

[59] Binnendijk and Johnson, 27.

[60] James, Kitfield, "Attack Always," National Journal (6 May 2003). <http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0503/050603db.htm/> [26 March 2005].

[61] U.S. Joint Forces Command, Joint Lessons Learned: Operation Iraqi Freedom Major Combat Operations (Norfolk VA: 2004), 22.

[62] Department of Defense, Defense Capabilities to Transition to and from Hostilities, Draft Directive 9-17-2004, Number 3000.cc (Washington, DC: 2004), 8-9.

[63] U.S. Department of the Army, Peace Operations, Field Manual 100-23 (Washington, DC: 30 December 1994), 1.

[64] Department of Defense, Defense Capabilities to Transition to and from Hostilities, Draft Directive, Number 3000.cc (Washington, DC: 2004), 2-3, 9. The Stability Operations Joint Operating Concept, published in September 2004 by USJFCOM, also makes this point. It states: "If war is thrust upon us, stability operations are essential to the ultimate achievement of strategic aims. Stability operations are a core mission of the military services and civil agencies." (iv)

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